



Colorado's Public Health Roundtable on Firearm-Related Violence Prevention Community Violence Starter Information

Focus 1. Define & Monitor the Problem

Community firearm-related violence is a broad category, which includes gang-related violence, violence conducted during another crime, and other homicides.

Below is a summary of the data provided in the [Colorado Violent Death Reporting System](#).

- **12.6%** of firearm-related homicides in 2021 were associated with gang violence.
- **75%** of the 366 people killed by homicide in 2021 were killed as a result of a firearm (274). The number of firearm-related homicides was up 22% from 2020.
- **22 per 100,000** Black Coloradans were killed by firearm-related homicide for the years 2020 and 2021 (crude rate). This is compared to a rate of 4 per 100,000 on average for all races and ethnicities. The next highest crude rate for populations based on race or ethnicity are Latino/as at 7 per 100,000. Males are also at a rate of 7.
- **10.3 per 100,000** 19 to 24 year-olds were killed by firearm related homicide in 2021. This is followed by a rate of 7.9 per 100,000 for 15-18 year-olds and 7.6 for 25-34 year-olds and 7.1 for 35-44 year-olds.
- **15.6%** of firearm-related homicide victims in 2020 used a weapon. In another 8.4% of cases there was drug involvement.



Figure 1. Colorado Firearm-related Homicides, Precipitating Crime and Criminal Activity, 2020 Source: [Colorado Violent Death Reporting System](#)

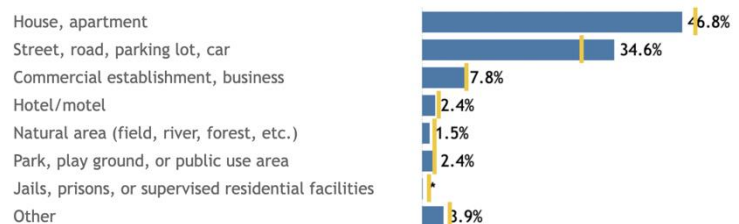


Figure 2. Location where Fatal Firearm-related Homicide Injury was Inflicted, 2020. Source: [Colorado Violent Death Reporting System](#)

Focus 2: Develop Understanding of Risk & Protective Factors

Risk Factors: There are a number of risk factors associated at both the individual and environmental levels.

Individual Risk Factors: The following may be individual risk factors:

1. Prior violent victimization.^{i, ii}
2. Substance use, including alcohol.^{i, ii}
3. History of discipline problems.ⁱ
4. Recidivist violent offenders.ⁱ



5. Below average academic achievement.^{i, ii}
6. Disengaged from school environment^{i, ii} or conventional activities.ⁱⁱ
7. History of aggressive behavior in early childhood.^{i, ii}
8. Attention deficits, hyperactivity, poor behavioral control, or learning disorders.ⁱⁱ
9. Low IQ or deficits in social, cognitive, or information-processing abilities.ⁱⁱ
10. High emotional distress.ⁱⁱ

Environmental Factors: The following are risk factors related to family, peer relationships, and community:

1. Exposure to violence & conflict in the family.ⁱⁱ
2. Poor family functioning (e.g., authoritarian childrearing; low parental involvement; harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline; low attachment; low parental education and income; parental substance abuse or criminality).ⁱⁱ
3. Neighborhood characteristics, such as growing up in a neighborhood with persistent violent crime,ⁱ social disorganization, low community participation, high transiency, concentration of poor residents, diminished economic opportunity.ⁱⁱ
4. Easy access to firearm(s).ⁱ
5. Know someone who has killed or been killed.ⁱ
6. Low-income families.ⁱ
7. Association with delinquent peers or gang involvement.^{ii, iii}
8. Social rejection by peers.ⁱⁱ
9. Stressful event paired with perception of need to retaliate (e.g., provocation, disrespect, someone close to the perpetrator being killed or injured, etc.).ⁱ

Protective Factors: Research on youth violence includes factors like high educational aspirations, positive social orientation, connectedness to family or adults outside the family, family involvement, involvement with social activities, school climate, and close relationships with non-deviant peers, to name a few (see reference for more details).ⁱⁱ

Focus 3: Engage the Community to Promote Multi-Sector Prevention Strategies

Below are potential public health strategies identified to address firearm-related community violence:

Upstream (e.g., root cause & social determinants)

- Community renewal.^{iv}
- Social-emotional skill development, including home visiting and parental training.^{iv}
- Support for children and families for those with high ACES scores.^{iv}
- Targeted family job / youth programs.^{iv}
- School discipline reform.^{iv}
- Cultural identity and resilience (narrative).^{iv}
- Community-directed processes (e.g., communities that care model).^{iv}

Direct Prevention

- Secure gun retailers.^{iv}
- Disrupt gun trafficking.^{iv}
- Focused deterrence.^{iv}
- Street outreach (e.g., Cure Violence).^{iv}
- Reduce illegal gun access.



- Mental health first aid.^v
- Victim impact panels.^v

Intervention

- Behavioral / family therapy to address troubled teens.^{iv}
- Police micro-targeting violent blocks / people.^{iv}
- Emergency room interventions (e.g., AIM).^{iv}
- Juvenile justice system diversion programs.^{iv}

Preparedness and Response

- Gun-spotter.^{iv}
- Retaliation intervention (interrupt transmission; conflict resolution).^{iv}
- Standard response protocols.^{iv}

Recovery

- Restorative justice (victim / offender dialogues).^{iv}
- Fatality review teams.^{iv}
- Solve murders.^{iv}
- Build police / community trust, including procedural justice training.^{iv}
- Trauma supports post tragedy by religious institutions (e.g., Safe Haven).^v
- Mental health for grief, loss, and trauma.^v

ⁱ Bushman, B.J., et. al. (2018). [Risk factors for youth violence: Youth violence commission, International Society for Research on Aggression \(ISRA\)](#). *Aggr Behav*, 44: 331-336.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control, [Risk and Protective Factors, Youth Violence Prevention](#). **See link for more details and protective factors.**

ⁱⁱⁱ Additional information about risk and protective factors related to gang involvement can be found at the [National Gang Center](#).

^{iv} Bornstein, Jacob. (2023) *Youth Protection in Every Neighborhood Project*. Wellstone Collaborative Strategies.

^v Monroe, Nicole. (2023) Personal communication.

